



To: Co-chairpersons Senator Dotzler and Representative Ford

From: Konni Cawiezell, Legislative Liaison

Subject: Job Training Needs Study Committee

Date: November 3, 2009

Within the community college structure, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) is responsible for reviewing the programs/training that provides the support services for community college students. Before a program is initially approved, a community college works with a designated consultant in the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation to ensure there is a need for the program in that region of the state. The community college accreditation process also assists in determining whether an existing program is viable. If the program is not viable or is duplicative, there may be a recommendation to merge the program with one in another region or eliminate the program.

### **Program Evaluation**

The evaluation of community colleges' career and technical programs is an on-going process. Each community college's state accreditation visit is coordinated with a review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visits. Therefore, the state does both comprehensive and interim accreditation visits on the same schedule as the Higher Learning Commission. Depending on which of the two Higher Learning Commission models a college utilizes, the visits would occur on a four and seven year rotation or a five and ten year rotation. The colleges are required to keep all program evaluations on file. All community colleges have been following their set evaluation procedures and have not been cited for failing to evaluate the required number of programs annually.

Iowa Administrative Code requires all the following:

#### **281 – IAC 46.7(4)**

The department of education shall review at least 20 percent of approved vocational education programs within the state annually, to ensure that the programs are:

- a. Compatible with educational reform efforts.
- b. Capable of responding to technological change and innovation.

- c. Meeting educational needs of the students and employment community including students with disabilities, both male and female students, from diverse racial and ethnic groups.
- d. Enabling students enrolled to perform the minimum competencies independently.
- e. Articulated/integrated with the total school curriculum.
- f. Enabling students with a secondary vocational background to pursue other educational interests in a postsecondary setting, if desired.
- g. Availing students with support services and eliminating access barriers to education and employment for both traditional and nontraditional students, men and women, persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities.

Evaluation activities include both secondary and postsecondary vocational education instructional programs. A statewide evaluation system utilizing multiple indicators will encompass the requirements of both state and federal vocational education legislation.

### **Support Services for Students**

All of the fifteen community colleges of Iowa are required to provide support services to students as they are admitted and during their time at the colleges. Iowa Administrative Code (below) addresses the required services that assist students during their time of enrollment at the colleges until they graduate or leave the college. The evaluation of student support programs is the same as the program evaluation previously mentioned and includes what student services are needed. The evaluation of student services occurs through a review of the physical presence of the service as well as through a variety of student and staff interviews while at the college. During the state accreditation visits, all colleges have been found to be in compliance with the required services and, through the student interviews, are responsive to the needs of their students.

Iowa Administrative Code requires all the following:

#### **281 – IAC 21.6**

A program of student services shall be provided to meet the needs of students in the community college. The program of student services shall include the following seven functional areas:

- a. Orientation to college and career opportunities and requirements.
- b. Appraisal of individual potential.
- c. Consultation with students about their plans, progress, and problems.
- d. Participation of students in activities that supplement classroom experiences.
- e. Regulation to provide an optimal climate for social and academic development.
- f. Services that facilitate community college attendance through a program of financial assistance, and facilitate transition to further education or employment.
- g. Organization that provides for continuing articulation, evaluation, and improvement of the student services program.

**Program Contacts:**

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**Links:**

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools:

<http://www.ncahlc.org/>

Community College Accreditation:

[http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=258&Itemid=1434](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=258&Itemid=1434)